Hood Canal Coordinating Council Lead Entity 3 Year Work Program
v4.2007

The 2007 three year work program includes recovery plan implementation actions for Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed summer chum salmon, chinook salmon, and bull trout within the Hood Canal Coordinating Council lead entity boundary, as guided by their respective recovery plans. While the Mid-Hood Canal Chinook Salmon Recovery Plan (SRP) has been Federally-adopted by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), the Skokomish Chinook SRP is currently being reviewed and completed separately. The Hood Canal and Eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca (HC/ESJF) Summer Chum SRP was accepted and publicly reviewed by NMFS, and will be published in the federal register with their supplement this spring as a Federally-adopted SRP.

This update is the first time the lead entity has attempted to collate a sequenced, prioritized, and comprehensive list of actions in a way that allows interested parties to visualize a road map towards completion of a significant body of work for all ESA-listed salmon species, and moving us that much closer towards meeting short and long term objectives outlined in the SRPs. A completed and accurate work program should enable the collective partners involved to share efforts, match funding, and make more strategic decisions when prioritizing needed project components to move forward annually. Unfortunately, this iteration of the work program focuses less attention on non-capital projects solely as an artifact of the history of eligibility for SRFB funding. This in no way reflects the lack of need in this or other watersheds for additional efforts and funding to more fully incorporate H-integration, programmatic activities, capacity building, research, monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management. Indeed, as described in the various SRPs, our restoration efforts will be constrained and uncertain unless we do address these needs in the near future.

Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) modeling for Mid Hood Canal Chinook suggested that recovery targeting viable salmon population (VSP) parameters would require implementation of most if not all of the suite of projects rated either as high or lower implementation potential. The habitat strategy developed in the Mid-Hood Canal Chinook SRP included implementing the habitat protection and restoration actions from the high implementation potential category, while developing partnerships and strategies for addressing the remaining, more complicated, lower implementation potential projects. This 3 year work program includes a significant portion of the former category of actions, with several initial studies and some actions addressing the latter category (lower Dosewallips floodplain and Hama Hama estuary restorations).

Though a modeling effort has not yet been conducted for the biological prioritization of recommended actions in the Skokomish Chinook SRP, empirical studies, professional judgment, and an existing, sequenced, holistic watershed program did allow development of 3 to 5 year as well as 10 year habitat recovery actions. This 3 year work program includes the actions required between 2007 and 2010 to address known limiting habitat factors (upper watershed management, lower floodplain conservation, and estuarine levee removals), while laying the foundation for addressing longer term actions through a

commitment of resources to the partnership developing the Skokomish River General Investigation.

The focus of the HC/ESJF Summer Chum SRP is the protection and restoration of natal freshwater and sub-estuary (up to 1 mile) habitats supporting the 8 remaining extant subpopulations of summer chum (Tier 1), followed by the extinct subpopulations and their natal habitats (Tier 2), then other potential subpopulations (Tier 3), and finally remaining nearshore habitats (Tier 4). Additional information has also recently been provided through the Puget Sound Technical Review Team (TRT) Viability Analysis (2007) which supports these tiered priorities yet recommends increased ecological, spatial, and genetic diversity by ensuring protection of the larger number of the diversity units represented historically. An EDT analysis of extant subpopulations in the summer chum ESU is currently underway and may be available by this summer to help rank projects biologically as an additional factor in sequencing and prioritizing our annual efforts.

Multiple supporting documents to the Summer Chum SRP provide information on the critical importance of estuarine and marine shorelines to the persistence of summer chum (and chinook) salmon, including the Summer Chum Salmon Conservation Initiative (2000), the Hood Canal Coordinating Council (HCCC) Salmon Habitat Recovery Strategy (2005), the Mid-Hood Canal SRP (2005), and the TRT Viability Analysis (2007). These documents create alternative hypotheses for summer chum salmon nearshore habitat preference/requirements, which we'll discuss further below.

The HCCC lead entity is the formal project evaluation and prioritization body designated within the Summer Chum SRP and by the HCCC Board of Directors for most of the summer chum ESU, while the responsibility for Clallam County is the North Olympic Peninsula lead entity. Within the HCCC lead entity and for the purposes of this 3 year work program we have prioritized summer chum salmon "domains" as being 1 through 4, including:

1) 8 extant population's natal watersheds and subestuaries,
2) 3 re-introduced population's natal watersheds and subestuaries, & all significant nearshore environments,
3) extinct population's natal watersheds, and
4) other watersheds and nearshore environments

Three observations are readily apparent in the lead entity's efforts to prioritize "domains" within summer chum project proposals: that roughly 84% of the program by frequency focuses on the watersheds and natal subestuaries supporting extant chum subpopulations, that a much smaller set of second tier watersheds and natal subestuaries supporting reintroduced subpopulations are believed to be more critical initially than extinct subpopulations, and that non-natal nearshore projects of significant scale and benefit for summer chum are thought to be more important initially than restoring watersheds with extinct subpopulations. Inherent in this hypothesis is that at some point in the continuum of nearshore habitats and corrective actions a point exists where restoring diversity

components represented by watersheds that once supported now extinct subpopulations will outweigh marine rearing habitats for extant subpopulations.

Through this "domain" approach we are beginning a process of adaptively managing the SRPs through hypotheses testing and incorporation of new information. It is our intention that we will work with the TRT, co-managers, and multiple others to pursue the appropriateness of this approach during May and June 2007 so that we can create a final habitat project list that comports explicitly with the Summer Chum SRP and the latest technical and policy guidelines. In addition, our near-term and otherwise more certain approach for this issue is to implement a focused research plan to answer the related questions of requirements, preferences, and life history trajectories for summer chum and chinook salmon juveniles as they move from natal subestuaries into the marine environment.

Specific non-natal marine shoreline projects on the 3 year work program remain strategic, beneficial, and few in number for this 2007 update, with higher priority projects to be submitted to SRFB and lower priority projects to be submitted to nearshore restoration grant opportunities and landowner incentive programs. Of the higher priority projects, three are coastal lagoons within roughly 1, 3, and 3 miles of natal watersheds (Fairmont Marsh, Right Smart Cove, and Oak Head Marsh, respectively) and one project is a high quality habitat conservation effort in Tarboo/Dabob Bay which lies within the migratory corridor for multiple subpopulations and species of juvenile fish.

Proposed projects will be drawn from this 3 year work program for submittal to the 2007 SRFB grant round and the 2007-2009 Puget Sound Partnership SRP implementation funding package. Once projects are submitted as pre-proposals the lead entity and the SRFB Review Panel will review them through sponsor presentations and site visits, and will provide written and oral feedback as appropriate. Then final proposals will be submitted and ranked technically based on a set of project-level criteria meant to judge the strategic nature, benefit, certainty of success, and cost effectiveness. This technical rank will be presented to the Citizen Advisory Group known as the Habitat Project List Committee who will determine the final rank order with inclusion of socio-economic considerations. At that point, the 2 lists of projects for the 2 separate funding sources will be created to maximize match and leverage, and to meet specific target funding allocations for those grant programs.

The accompanying Microsoft Excel workbook of information provides detail on project priorities, limiting factors addressed, likely sponsors and partners, total project costs, unfunded and existing funding components, other sources of funds, 4 years of project staging, restoration type and location, and performance measures. In addition, each project has at least a brief description that can be printed as a separate worksheet.